Request for Decision

To: Committee of the Whole

Date: June 2nd, 2014

From: Michelle Geneau, Planner

Re: University Village Local Area Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee of the Whole direct staff to prepare an Amendment Bylaw to the Official Community Plan, to adopt the University Village Local Area Plan.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2013, Council supported the Terms of Reference and budget for the University Village Local Area Plan (UVLAP), and directed staff to work with the Municipality of North Cowichan to prepare a Request for Proposals. The contract was awarded to Stantec’s Community Design Team in May 2013. The project began in late May 2013, with an extensive public engagement and stakeholder advisory group process resulting in the proposed Plan that is now being presented to the Committee of the Whole for review.

A Local Area Plan is a statutory plan prepared for a smaller geographic area of a municipality where there is a need for further detail than the higher level Official Community Plan. The University Village Local Area Plan covers an area within both the City of Duncan and Municipality of North Cowichan. Both municipalities committed to undertaking a collaborative master planning exercise for the Cowichan Place lands under a 2007 Memorandum of Understanding. The focus area of the UVLAP includes the area surrounding the regional facilities and institutions in the Cowichan Place area, including Island Savings Centre, the Cowichan Aquatic Centre, and the Vancouver Island University campus lands. The Focus Area within the City of Duncan includes part of the downtown, and mixed use and high density residential areas.

The Trans Canada Highway Corridor Management Plan was also developed in conjunction with the UVLAP, and several of the policies and concepts in both plans overlap. The Corridor Management Plan will be presented in the near future, pending upcoming meetings with the project team and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure staff to confirm the implementation strategy of the proposed policies and projects.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed University Village Local Area Plan considers how the Plan area should develop or redevelop over the next thirty or more years. The Plan contains a master concept for redevelopment, as well as a range of policies addressing a variety of topics, including streetscapes, energy efficiency, building types and open space.

The attached report by Brian Green, Manager of Planning and Sustainability for the Municipality of North Cowichan, outlines the key stages, public engagement and Plan components (see Attachment A of this report). The Open House panels included as Attachment B also help to provide an overview of the UVLAP. A summary of the questionnaire responses from the April 2014 Open House where the draft plan was presented is included as Attachment C. The entire UVLAP is included as Attachment D.
Municipality of North Cowichan staff will present the UVLAP to their Community Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) on June 8th, and Council on June 24th, for review and comments with the recommendation to also prepare an amending bylaw to their OCP to adopt the Plan. Comments received from the City’s Committee of the Whole and Municipality’s CPAC and Council will be reviewed by staff and the consulting team prior to moving forward.

IMPLICATIONS:

Financial: The UVLAP contains a concept for long-term redevelopment of the area. Servicing and infrastructure improvements, including improvements to the road network may be necessary over time. The Plan should help to provide certainty for developers on the type and form of development expected for the Plan Area. Public amenities may also be acquired or financed through Community Amenity Contributions, density bonusing provisions, and external funding sources.

Policy: The UVLAP, once adopted contains a set of policies and guidelines to provide further detail on the Plan Area in the OCP. The UVLAP can also help to guide redevelopment of the Zoning Bylaw and other future plans and policies.

Strategic Priorities: The UVLAP directly relates to Action 10.1 of the City’s Strategic Plan: “Work with North Cowichan on joint planning of the University Village Area”, under Priority 10 “Increase partnerships and connections with the community and neighbourhood jurisdictions”. Implementation will relate to most of the other Strategic Plan Priorities and several Actions.

Sustainability: The ICSP helped to shape the UVLAP, along with the Municipality of North Cowichan’s Climate and Energy Action Plan.

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATIONS:

a) That the Committee of the Whole direct staff to prepare an Amendment Bylaw to the Official Community Plan to adopt the University Village Local Area Plan, with recommended changes.

b) That the Committee of the Whole wait to hear feedback from Municipality of North Cowichan Council prior to directing staff to prepare an Amendment Bylaw to the Official Community Plan, to adopt the University Village Local Area Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment A: Municipality of North Cowichan Council Report on the UVLAP by Brian Green
Attachment B: April 2014 Open House Panels
Attachment C: Summary of Public Feedback on the Draft UVLAP
Attachment D: University Village Local Area Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Geneau, Planner
Reviewed by CAO